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ABSTRACT

This report documents an evaluation of the Asian American Communications In-School Staff Workshops (A-AC). The A-AC provided workshops on Asian and Asian American history and culture, as well as strategies for working with Asian American students in schools with large Asian populations. Phase I workshops focused on information gained through a school survey to provide workshops on understanding Asian American students at 28 schools. Phase II provided strategy workshops about particular student concerns in 10 schools, and Phase III provided workshops on history and culture to five schools on request. In all, the A-AC conducted 53 workshops in 43 schools, as well as related parent and student workshops in seven schools. The results of a survey indicate that participants increased their knowledge as a result of attending the workshops. Sixty percent rated relevance very high, and over 70 percent found them well-organized and of excellent quality. Evaluation recommendations include using visual aids in workshop presentations and providing a handbook on cultural differences of Asian American students. (SLD)

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OREA Report

ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS IN-SCHOOL STAFF WORKSHOPS (A-AC)

1990-91

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS
IN-SCHOOL STAFF WORKSHOPS
(A-AC)

1990-91

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS
IN-SCHOOL STAFF WORKSHOPS
(A-AC)
1990-91

SUMMARY

- Asian-American Communications In-School Staff Workshops (A-AC) was fully implemented. The program conducted on-site workshops on Asian/Asian American histories and cultures for school staff, parents, and students. The program also provided related services upon request.

- A-AC met its objectives for conducting a pre-workshop survey and presenting Phase I, II, and III workshops. A-AC also met its objectives for providing parent workshops, student workshops, and support services upon request.

Asian-American Communications In-School Staff Workshops (A-AC) was in its third year of funding by the Board of Education to provide workshops for staff, parents, and students in schools with large Asian populations. The project also received funding from the Aaron Diamond Foundation and the Chinese Asian Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Center (CABETAC). For the year under review, the program conducted 53 workshops in 43 schools. Phase I workshops focused on information garnered from a survey from the school. Phase II strategy workshops, and Phase III provided workshops on Asian-American history and literature. Participants rated the workshops very favorably.

The conclusions based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- When possible, use visual aids in workshop presentations.

- Consider providing participating schools with a handbook on understanding the cultural differences of Asian-American students.

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This report has been prepared by the Bilingual, Multicultural, and Early Childhood Education Evaluation Unit of the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. Thanks are due to Dr. Katherine Durham for collecting the data and writing the report.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) evaluation of Asian-American Communications In-School Staff Workshops (A-AC). The program was in its third year of funding by the Board of Education. The project also received funding from the Aaron Diamond Foundation and the Chinese Asian Technical Assistance Center (CABETAC). A-AC provided workshops on Asian/Asian American histories and cultures as well as strategies for working with Asian-American students in schools with large Asian populations. Phase I workshops focused on information gained through a school survey to provide pertinent workshops on understanding Asian-American students; Phase II provided strategy workshops; and Phase III provided workshops on Asian-American history and literature upon request. In addition, A-AC provided parent and student workshops and support services to schools upon request.

STAFF

A-AC staff consisted of a coordinator, assistant coordinator, office manager, and administrative assistant. The coordinator, office manager, and administrative assistant were part-time staff. The assistant coordinator position was unfilled for most of the year due to budget cuts and a delay in the receipt of funds. A-AC trained graduate students from Teachers College and Columbia University and used them as consultants to provide expertise in specific Asian cultures. The consultants assisted the coordinator with workshops,

translations, and other related services requested by participating schools and parents.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

OREA staff gathered qualitative information through interviews with the project director and observations of the workshops. At the end of each workshop, participants completed surveys on a voluntary basis. OREA received and analyzed 1,370 such surveys.

II. OUTCOMES

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Phase I

- To conduct a pre-workshop survey at each of the participating schools.

The project sent letters and surveys to schools with significant Asian student populations, offering to provide a workshop and follow-up support services. Responding schools completed a survey indicating specific needs A-AC might address. Most often, the needs expressed were related to cultural differences, family structure, and the educational system in Asian countries.

A-AC staff visited each participating school for an entire day and interviewed approximately 50 students (a parental consent form was required for each) to obtain information which they would use when developing the workshop for that school. The project director interviewed the principal, guidance

counselor, School Based Support Team (S.B.S.T.), and key teachers.

A-AC met its first Phase I objective.

- To provide a staff workshop on understanding Asian-American students in each of the participating schools.

A-AC conducted Phase I workshops in 28 schools during faculty conferences. Each workshop focused on information the school had provided in the completed survey. A question-and-answer period followed the workshop presentation.

A-AC met its second Phase I objective.

Phase II

- To provide a follow-up workshop for school staff on strategy development.

A-AC conducted Phase II workshops in ten schools. In these workshops, the speaker engaged the participants in an open discussion about their particular student concerns. The speaker also integrated data from the student interviews into the discussion and used the information to suggest appropriate strategies for relating to Asian students.

A-AC met its Phase II objective.

Phase III

- To provide a workshop for school staff on Asian-American history and literature upon request.

A-AC conducted Phase III workshops in five schools. Each workshop focused on the history of a particular Asian-American group as requested by a participating school.

A-AC met its Phase III objective.

RELATED SERVICES

Parent Workshops

- To provide parent workshops upon request.

A-AC presented six parent workshops, four in the same school. The project covered topics requested by the school and generally sought to help parents understand school policies and procedures. A-AC frequently conducted parent workshops in the native language of the parents.

As a result of the parent workshops requested by a school, the attendance of the Asian prekindergarten children improved significantly.

A-AC met its parent workshop objective.

Student Workshops

- To provide student workshops upon request.

A-AC provided student workshops in four schools. Schools requested student workshops on Asian-American history and most often held them during an assembly. Workshop presentations were related to the curriculum taught at the school.

A-AC met its student workshop objective.

Support Services

- To provide support services upon request.

The project fulfilled several requests for mediation, home visits, translations, and tutorial services for students. On two occasions, schools requested that A-AC mediate between the child welfare worker and the families of children who were being investigated for alleged child abuse/neglect. A-AC also

provided translation services for those families who spoke little English.

At parents' request, A-AC provided tutorial services to second and third graders who faced retention in grade.

A-AC met its support services objective.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Survey data indicated that participants increased their knowledge as a result of the workshops. Sixty percent of the participants rated workshop relevance as very high. More than seventy percent considered the workshops to be well organized and of excellent quality.

Workshop participants suggested that the project provide a handbook to assist them in understanding the cultures of Asian-Americans. They also suggested that visual aids be used more often in workshop presentations.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A-AC provided workshops for school personnel, students, and parents to foster better relations and improve communications.

A-AC successfully met its staff development and related services objectives for the 1990-91 school year. It conducted Phase I workshops in 28 schools, Phase II workshops in ten schools, Phase III workshops in five schools, and responded to several requests for related services. Despite the funding and staffing difficulties encountered, the project fulfilled all of its workshop commitments. Overall, workshop participants rated the sessions very favorably.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- When possible, use visual aids in workshop presentations.
- Consider providing participating schools with a handbook on understanding the cultural differences of Asian-American students.